

# SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agenda Item 10.3

Meeting Date: November 5, 2015

Subject: Linked Learning Pathways: Preparing Sacramento City Unified School District Students for College, Career, and Life after High School

Information Item Only

Information Item Only
Approval on Consent Agenda
Conference (for discussion only)
Conference/First Reading (Action Anticipated:
Conference/Action
Action
Public Hearing

**<u>Division</u>**: Academic Office/College and Career Readiness

**Recommendation:** Receive information on Linked Learning Pathways: Preparing SCUSD Students for College, Career, and Life after High School

<u>Background/Rationale</u>: Pillar one of the district's strategic plan calls for the district to prepare all students for college and career readiness upon graduation from high school. Linked Learning is the signature educational approach the district utilizes to provide a world class education so that all students graduate ready for the postsecondary learning of their choice, well qualified to enter the local workforce and global economy, and ready to reap the benefits of active participation in our democratic society.

The report entitled, *California's Forgotten Middle Skills Jobs*, written in 2009 for the Skills2Compete-California Campaign, confirms the importance of such educational approaches. It states, "Middle skills jobs represent the largest share of jobs in California (49%) and the largest share of future job openings." In addition, it asserts, "If we are to realize our state's full economic potential, educational access must reflect the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy and the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce." To do this, "Every Californian should have access to the equivalent of up to two years of education or training past high school." Industry leaders in the Sacramento area also concur. From their perspective, the capital region is ripe for full recovery from the current economic distress, and businesses will take the risk and relocate here if a well-trained workforce can be guaranteed. For these reasons, key local businesses and community organizations are partnering with SCUSD to provide pathway students with mentors and work-based learning opportunities and teachers with externships that will better position students to pursue these viable employment opportunities.

<u>Financial Considerations</u>: Current sources of funding for the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Department include LCFF, SCOE, Carl D. Perkins Grant, California Career Pathways Trust Grant, and The California Endowment Grant equaling \$3,345,304.

## **LCAP Goals**: College and Career Readiness

### **Documents Attached:**

1. Executive Summary

Links to the Following: <a href="http://www.scusd.edu/pod/documents-linked-learning-pathways-board-presentation">http://www.scusd.edu/pod/documents-linked-learning-pathways-board-presentation</a>

- 2. Behaviors of Learning and Teaching Continuum
- 3. Linked Learning Essential Elements
- 4. Work-Based Learning in Linked Learning
- 5. Community of Practice Continuum

Estimated Time of Presentation: 20 minutes

Submitted by: Joe Stymeist, Interim Director, College and

Career Readiness

Approved by: José L. Banda, Superintendent

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# I. Overview of Linked Learning Pathways: Preparing SCUSD Students for College, Career, and Life after High School

The ever-changing global landscape continues to pose new and demanding challenges in public education. As reported by Achieve, "A high school diploma is no longer enough. Nearly every good job requires some postsecondary education and/or training". Consequently, Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) is driven to graduate students who are college and career ready, and in the high school space, Linked Learning is the district's signature approach. This approach, which is implemented via industry-themed pathways, includes four core components: 1) rigorous academics, 2) challenging career technical education, 3) work-based learning, and 4) wrap-around student support. Each pathway represents a broad industry theme that can appeal to and engage a student regardless of his or her prior academic achievement and postsecondary aspirations. Students choose among industry-themed pathways in fields such as energy, engineering and sciences; arts, media and entertainment; health sciences and medical technology; manufacturing and product development; and law and public safety that are high-wage and high-growth in the region.

Linked Learning is a proven educational model that transforms the traditional school experience. Industry-themed pathways connect learning with students' interests and career aspirations, making their high school education personally relevant and providing them with professional learning experiences beyond the classroom where they can engage with working adults and apply what they learn in the classroom to solve real-world problems. This type of education leads to higher graduation rate, increased postsecondary enrollment, higher earning potential, and greater civic engagement. All pathways, by design, offer students a college preparatory education, leaving the door open for students to pursue any career goal or interest after high school.

SCUSD was one of the nine districts in the California Linked Learning District Initiative funded by the James Irvine Foundation from 2009 to 2015. Since 2009, the number of Linked Learning Pathways in the district has grown from 4 to 21 pathways. Each pathway serves between 150 to 500 students. Currently, 32% of high school students are enrolled in pathways. To ensure high quality implementation and coherence, the following are focus areas of work within the Linked Learning implementation in SCUSD: Defense of Learning, Work-Based Learning, Pathway Alignment and Articulation, Communities of Practice, and Pathway Quality Review and Certification.

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### **II. Driving Governance**

Pillar one of the district's strategic plan calls for the district to prepare all students for college and career readiness upon graduation from high school. The report entitled, *California's Forgotten Middle Skills Jobs*, written in 2009 for the Skills2Compete-California Campaign, confirms this need. It states, "Middle skills jobs represent the largest share of jobs in California (49%) and the largest share of future job openings." In addition, it asserts, "If we are to realize our state's full economic potential, educational access must reflect the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy and the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce." To do this, "Every Californian should have access to the equivalent of up to two years of education or training past high school." Industry leaders in the Sacramento area also concur. From their perspective, the capital region is ripe for full recovery from the current economic distress, and businesses will take the risk and relocate here if a well-trained workforce can be guaranteed. For these reasons, key local businesses and community organizations are partnering with SCUSD to provide pathway students with mentors and work-based learning opportunities and teachers with externships.

Linked Learning addresses some of the fundamental challenges facing high schools in meeting this need. Many traditional academic programs do not feel relevant to students' lives and aspirations. At the same time, traditional career and technical education (CTE), such as Regional Occupation Programs (ROP) often lacks the academic rigor required for access to and success in college. Linked Learning responds to these challenges and is an added complement to the district's implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which are a rigorous set of academic standards, designed to prepare students for college and career. With its focus on challenging career technical education, students see the relevance and application of academic content and skills. Linked Learning is the educational approach through which the district provides a world class education so that all students graduate ready for the postsecondary learning of their choice, well qualified to enter the local workforce and global economy, and ready to reap the benefits of active participation in our democratic society.

## III. Budget

Since 2009, SCUSD has been implementing Linked Learning Pathways with a grant-based budget that provides for personnel professional learning, substitutes, stipends, and instructional resources. Previous sources of funding included the James Irvine Foundation, Small Learning Community Cohort-8 Grant, Carl Perkins, Regional Occupation Program (ROP), AB790, California Career Pathways Trust Grant, and donations from community and industry

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partners. This year we received new funding from The California Endowment Grant. Due to the sunset of the James Irvine and Cohort 8 grants, LCFF has been allocated to maintain the current implementation of the Linked Learning pathways.

Current sources of funding for the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Department include LCFF, SCOE, Carl D. Perkins Grant, California Career Pathways Trust Grant, and The California Endowment Grant. The chart below details the 2015-16 CCR Department budgets which support district Linked Learning Pathways and ROP/CTE programs.

Funding Source: LCFF	\$692,007
Provides for specific College and Career Readiness Department	
personnel (3.6 FTE) and resources to support Linked Learning Pathways	
throughout the district.	
Funding Source: SCOE and LCFF	\$1,537,315
Provides for specific ROP/CTE personnel (16.5 FTE) and resources to	
support ROP/CTE programs throughout the district	
Funding Source: Carl D. Perkins (Federal Grant) Provides support for	\$489,442
professional learning, equipment, services, and instructional materials	
for the district's qualifying CTE/ROP programs.	
Funding Source: California Career Pathways Trust Grant (Year 2 of 4)	\$236,540
Provides for professional learning, coaching, and other services to	
support the creation of a Work-Based Learning Infrastructure in SCUSD	
as defined in the grant proposal that established the EGUSD/SCUSD	
Capital Academies and Pathways (CAP) consortium.	
Funding Source: The California Endowment Grant (Year 1 of 2)	\$390,000
Provides funds for SCUSD health education pathways at Health	
Professions High School and Hiram Johnson High School in support of	
building healthy communities in the city of Sacramento. Funds from	
this grant provide for professional learning, instructional materials,	
pathway marketing, student work-based learning activities, and 0.4	
FTE for a part-time program specialist.	
Total	\$3,345,304

## IV. Goals, Objectives and Measures

The district's goals for implementing Linked Learning pathways are to increase student learning and achievement, and graduate students who are college and career ready. In order to achieve

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these goals, Linked Learning pathways must implement the approach fully and with high quality. This means, all pathways must have the following four core components in place:

- 1. A rigorous academic component that includes English, mathematics, science, history, foreign language courses that prepare students to transition, without remediation, to postsecondary education, which includes community colleges, universities, apprenticeships, and formal employment training programs.
- 2. A career-based learning component of three or more courses that help students gain the knowledge and skills that can give them a head start on a successful career.
- 3. Real world workplace experiences including job shadowing and internships, give students professional experience before they leave high school, helping them to understand all the possible choices available to them.
- 4. Personalized support services including college planning, resume and interview counseling, mentoring and supplemental instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics that help students master critical academic and career-based components of their education.

Thus, the objectives for Linked Learning pathways are full implementation of the approach, annual self-assessment against Linked Learning Essential Elements Rubric (see attached), and on-going work of continuous improvement towards certification. The data generated from the pathway annual self-assessment and formal Linked Learning pathway quality review and certification process serve as an overall barometer for pathway success and growth.

In addition, the district measures student progress by analyzing student-level data in Linked Learning pathway membership throughout the year by using a variety of assessment tools including student work samples, common assessments, and performance-based assessments. The quality, effectiveness and fidelity of the implementation of teaching and learning resources are measured through the consistent review of curriculum content for alignment to standards, cognitive demand, accuracy, diversity and relevance. The quality of instruction and professional learning is determined through observations of instructional presentations and teacher reflection. Using multiple measures to further ensure validity, the district also collects perception data through surveys and evaluations of professional learning. All results are being used to inform programmatic changes and support to pathways.

#### V. Major Initiatives

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Linked Learning provides high school students enrolled in pathways rigorous college preparatory academic courses, demanding career preparatory courses, work-based learning experiences, and wrap-around student support with real-time support and interventions. To date, students across the district participate in 21 pathways, which are at varying levels of implementation. These Linked Learning pathways are housed within each of our comprehensive high schools and five small high schools. Below is a list of the 21 pathways in SCUSD.

- @C.K. McClatchy High School
  - 1. Criminal Justice Academy
  - 2. Law & Public Policy Academy
- @Hiram Johnson High School
  - 3. Health & Medical Science Academy
  - 4. Johnson Corporate Business Academy
  - 5. Johnson Law Academy
- @John F. Kennedy High School
  - 6. Manufacturing and Design Pathway
  - 7. Academy of Culinary Arts
  - 8. Criminal Justice & Community Service
- @Luther Burbank High School
  - 9. Business & Information Technology
  - 10. Construction & Design
  - 11. Global Studies
  - 12. Law & Social Justice
  - 13. Medicine & Health Sciences
  - 14. Visual & Performing Arts
- @Rosemont High School
  - 15. Energy, Science and Engineering Academy
  - 16. Green Academy: Urban Ag, Food & the Environment
- @Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School
  - 17. Careers in Health Pathway
- @George Washington Carver School of the Arts and Science
  - 18. Social and Environmental Justice Pathway
- @Sacramento New Technology High School: School of Design
  - 19. Graphic & Game Design Pathway
- @School of Engineering and Science
  - 20. Engineering Pathway
- @The MET Sacramento High School
  - 21. Learning Through Internships

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Since the main goal for pathways is full and high quality implementation of the Linked Learning approach, the College and Career Readiness (CCR) staff has been focusing their support to pathway teams and school site administrators on building their academic core program, career technical education, work-based learning, and student support services. In addition, for pathway continuous improvement and sustainability, CCR staff supports pathways to develop their communities of practice, advisory boards and engage in a continuous improvement cycle, which includes annual self-assessment, gap analysis, and action planning. Description of these support are detailed below.

#### **Rigorous Academics**

Support to pathways on rigorous academic program includes development and/or revision of academic core courses such as English, math, science, and social sciences to obtain UC approval for "a-g" status. Pathway teachers are provided opportunities to attend University of California Curriculum Integration (UCCI) institutes to develop new courses for UC approval. These UCCI courses allow students enrolled to satisfy both "a-g" and career technical education requirements. The district also contracts with the California Career Academies Support Network (CCASN) for a consultant to support teachers on the development of their course of study. In addition to course of study development, pathway teachers are also provided opportunities to be AP trained. Some of the AP courses that teachers have been supported to receive training on include English, Physics, and US History and Government. These AP courses are now being offered to students in pathways.

The support to pathways on curriculum, instruction and assessment has been focused on providing staff professional learning and collaboration time to develop and/or revise multidisciplinary integrated units of study and performance-based assessments to address Common Core, Next Generation Science, and CTE standards. These professional learning and collaborations are facilitated by the Linked Learning Coordinator, Sector Coaches and consultants from ConnectEd (The California Center for College and Career). Pathway teachers are provided access to tools and resources (i.e. Common Core aligned rubrics, sample performance tasks, etc.) on ConnectEdStudios.org. Pathway teachers are also provided opportunities to engage in externships to learn from practicing professionals the current industry practices and standards so they have the knowledge and content to develop career-related units of study and authentic work-based performance assessment. Pathway curriculum and assessments receive regular input and feedback from postsecondary and industry partners.

During the past three years, six pathways were supported with professional development and

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coaching support from Envisions Learning Partner to develop their pathway's student portfolio and defense of learning systems aligned to the district graduate profile. Since the district graduate profile consists of competencies of college and career ready graduates and the Linked Learning approach is a proven approach to prepare students for both college and career, these six pathways are early implementers of the district graduate profile. The six pathways are now implementing their systems in place of senior project. Beginning this school year, the district is continuing this model of support to scale up the development and implementation of student defense of learning in four new pathways.

#### **Challenging Career Technical Education**

Career and Technical Education (CTE) is designed to prepare our students for high wage, high skill, and high demand jobs. In the context of the Career and College ready student, CTE offers a framework for students to explore career possibilities in the context of a highly rigorous curriculum of both academic and practical application of skills learned in the classroom. Through a sequence of classes within their pathway, students gain proficiency, which can translate into both future exploration at postsecondary schools or allow them to enter the workforce.

The support to pathways on CTE has focused on revising their course of study to align with new CTE standards and current industry practices. This work is supported by SCOE and UCCI and facilitated by the district Linked Learning and CTE Coordinators. CTE teachers are also provided opportunities to engage in externships to stay current on industry standards and best practices. In addition, they are provided professional learning on best teaching practices and strategies to differentiate their instruction so all students can access challenging career content. CTE teachers participate in externships and professional learning at the Education for Careers Conference and SCOE hosted Industry Sector Meetings with academic core teachers so they can continue the collaboration for developing and implementing multidisciplinary integrated curriculum, instruction and assessment.

#### **Continuum of Work-based Learning**

A key component of a high quality Linked Learning implementation for students include real-world experiences that range from being mentored to interviewing for internships. This is work-based learning (WBL), and it is done in part to prepare students for possible career paths. The support to pathways on their work-based learning includes assisting them with developing industry partnerships to provide work-based learning opportunities for students. This work is done by building pathway staff capacity to reach out and engage with industry partners. Each pathway receives support on building a continuum of WBL (see attached) opportunities for

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students in grades 9-12 from a combination of these support staff: Career Specialists, Sector Coaches, Pathway Coach and WBL Coordinator. Career Specialists also provide work-readiness workshops for students. To build staff capacity, they often co-teach these lessons with pathway teachers. Career Specialists and Sector Coaches are focused on bringing students valuable skills such as resume writing workshops and mock interviews. Further, they support the school site by formalizing advisory boards and supporting continued advisory board engagement. This capacity building is overseen by the WBL coordinator.

The work-based learning continuum allows for students to have a variety of experiences in learning job skills – from informational guest speakers, to job site tours, and a capstone internship. While district support varies from work-based learning experience to experience, the model Linked Learning districts have partnered with their community industry leaders. This partnership reaches deep and can allow for collaboration such as curriculum development with industry leaders as well as district coverage of student insurance at internship sites. For this reason, the other focus of support is building infrastructure of WBL for all pathways and academies in the region.

#### **Wrap-around Student Support**

Student support in a Linked Learning pathway is personalized and occurs in a family-like environment. Students in pathways are cohort scheduled into 3-4 courses at each grade level. This means a student follows his or her peers from class to class throughout the day. This way, students build strong relationship with their peers and the teachers that they share. Hence, site administrators are provided training and onsite coaching on master scheduling in a way that pathway students are cohort scheduled and teachers in pathways have common prep.

Pathway students receive support from assigned counselor on college and career planning. They also benefit from mentoring from community and industry professionals. Pathway staff meets on a weekly or biweekly basis for 1 to 1.5 hours to share and discuss the grades and learning progress of their students and agree to support plans that may be needed. In addition, pathway teachers also collaborate on instructional strategies and serve as critical friends to each other. Pathway teachers received training on the Linked Learning Framework for Learning and Teaching and Behaviors of Learning and Teaching (see attached) and on-going coaching support from the Linked Learning Coordinator as well as Sector and Pathway Coaches.

#### **Pathway Communities of Practice**

The work of Linked Learning happens in communities of practice. A pathway's success and sustainability depends on the level of its team functioning as a community of practice.

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Members of a community of practice are practitioners dedicated to continuous improvement. Teacher teams working together in Linked Learning pathways, in partnership with other staff and industry and community partners, can create a powerful, sustainable, evolving community of practice dedicated to the goal of graduating all students ready for success in college, career, and life. A pathway team uses the attached Community of Practice Continuum to assess and guide their self-improvement in areas such as focus on student learning and use of data; shared beliefs, commitment, and common practices; and collaborating effectively and turning words into action.

This summer, teachers from pathways in SCUSD and academies in Elk Grove USD along with professors at Sacramento City College and CSU Sacramento and key industry partners in the healthcare sector engaged in a weeklong institute. As a result of this institute, the Health Pathway Community of Practice was established. The next industry-specific community of practice in the works is the information, technology and communication pathway. In the Linked Learning world, communities of practice and advisory boards are two essential components for pathway progress and sustainability.

#### **Pathway Continuous Improvement and Certification**

The district Linked Learning Coordinator supports pathway teams to engage in continuous improvement process by working with Pathway Leads, who are teacher leaders, to build their capacity to lead their teams. Pathway Leads facilitate their teams on annual self-assessment against Linked Learning Essential Element Rubric, gap analysis, and action plan to continue working towards high quality implementation and certification status. The Leads attend a monthly 1.5-hour meeting and 2-3 released days of professional learning facilitated by the Linked Learning Coordinator. They also receive on-going coaching and follow up support from their assigned Linked Learning certified coaches. In addition, all Leads participate in the online SCUSD Pathway Leads Community of Practice on ConnectEdStudios.org.

As stated earlier, since 2009, the number of Linked Learning pathways in the district has grown from four to twenty-one. Of these twenty-one pathways, five are Linked Learning certified, which means they successfully completed a rigorous external quality review process. The pathway quality review process includes pathway team uploading evidence for 24 criteria to an online system called OPTIC at ConnectEdStudios.org and engaging in a 1.5-day visit from external reviewers. The reviewers review all uploaded evidence, visit classrooms, and speak with focus student and teacher groups as well as parents and industry partners. In order to be certified, a pathway must be performing at the 'meet' or 'exceed' level for all 24 criteria. Linked Learning certification is a 3-year process and two of these five certified pathways have also

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successfully completed their recertification process in 2014-15. This year, one more pathway will undergo a quality review with the goal of obtaining its Linked Learning certification status in spring 2016.

#### VI. Results

#### **Student Enrollment, Learning and Achievement**

Student enrollment in SCUSD Linked Learning pathways has been a steady increase of about 3-5% each year. As of 2014-15, the total enrollment was 32% of high school students. Based on pathway self-reporting and informal data collection, students in pathways are graduating from high school more ready for college without needing remediation. More AP courses are offered in pathways. In addition, due to the increase in number of articulated courses and/or dual enrollment courses offered in pathways, students are also graduating from high school with as many as 6-9 college credits. In collaboration with staff in the Assessment, Research and Evaluation Department, a feature in Infinite Campus has been set up to capture these data for pathway students beginning in 2015-16. In future years, we will be able to report on pathway students' graduation rates, a-g completion, EAP English and Math scores, and college credits earned in high school.

#### **Pathway Development and Certification**

Of the twenty-one pathways in the district, eleven are fully implementing the Linked Learning approach, meaning they have all four core components in place. Of these eleven, five are certified as high quality pathways and one is seeking certification in Spring 2016. The following pathways are certified pathways: 1) Health Professions, 2) New Tech, 3) The MET, 4) School of Engineering and Sciences, and 5) Johnson Corporate Business Academy at Hiram Johnson. George Washington Carver – Social and Environmental Justice Pathway is seeking its certification status this year. The following five pathways will seek certification within the next 2-3 years: 1) Law and Public Policy at CKM, 2) Manufacturing and Design at Kennedy, 3) Law and Social Justices at Burbank, 4) Energy, Science and Engineering Academy at Rosemont, and 5) Green Academy at Rosemont.

#### VII. Lessons Learned/Next Steps

- Communicating the significance of Linked Learning and its status as the district's signature approach to college and career readiness to all stakeholders is vital.
- Customized coaching and support to pathways as they deepen their work and move towards Linked Learning Certification is essential.

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- Maintaining strong pathways within a school site is dependent on the support of not just the teachers teaching the class, but the principal, assistant principals and counselors.
- Work to increase community understanding of CTE in the context of Linked Learning pathways vs. traditional vocational programs.
- Continue supporting George Washington Carver HS for a successful pathway quality review and certification process in 2015-16.
- Continue to develop and backwards map a balanced system of instruction, curriculum, assessment, and accountability to the Graduate Profile, specifically that of the Envision Learning Partners model.
- Continue to integrate staff professional learning of Common Core State Standards and the Linked Learning approach.
- Continue supporting Linked Learning pathways to align and articulate their courses, so students complete a UC a-g course sequence.
- Continue to support Linked Learning pathways as they examine and review their pathway effectiveness with respect to the Linked Learning Essential Elements.
- Support the development of new pathways as the district moves towards the goal of 60% of high school students enrolled in college and career ready Linked Learning pathways.
- Continue to build the capacity of site administration and pathway lead teachers, so they
  may champion and lead Linked Learning implementation at their sites.
- Develop a district broad-based coalition to support pathways as they establish and maintain active work-based learning (WBL) advisory board.
- Convene regional industry sector advisory boards that champion work-based learning and support the site advisory boards.
- Design targeted, on-going professional learning for teachers and administrators that will deepen their ability to provide integrated and career-related instruction that truly prepares every student for entry to college and career environments without remediation.
- Update/Revise CTE curriculum for each career pathway so that where possible, CTE
  courses meet the rigor and expectations for UC approval and satisfy "a-g" requirements,
  and where appropriate, in alignment for articulation with local postsecondary
  institutions.
- Continue taking a regional approach (i.e. collaborate with Sac State and SCOE) to recruit, support, and retain highly qualified CTE teachers.

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• Continue to use quantitative data (A-G completion, test scores) alongside our qualitative data (WBL objectives set by the pathway site, rubrics of industry engagement) to assess quality of pathway and student impact.